BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

BC STATS

Service BC
Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services

Data Services
(250) 387-0327
BC.Stats@gov.bc.ca
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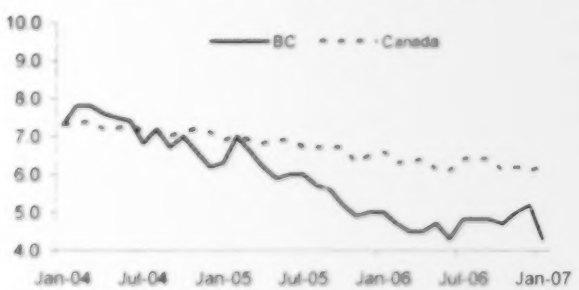
Current Statistics ◆ February 2007

- **BC's unemployment rate dropped to 4.3% (*seasonally adjusted*) in January.** Employment increased by 1.4% (+31,700 workers), which was more than enough to absorb the 0.5% increase in the size of the labour force. The participation rate remained relatively stable in January (+0.2 percentage points), with 66.4 % of the working age population (15 and older) in the labour market. British Columbians continue to enjoy one of the best job markets in the country. Together, BC and Alberta (where there were more than 55,000 jobs) accounted for 63% of the increase at the national level.

  Among the provinces, British Columbia had the third lowest unemployment rate after Saskatchewan (4.1%) and Alberta (3.3%). The national rate was 6.2%. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

BC and Canada Unemployment Rate (SA) (%)



- **Both the goods and service sectors recorded strong growth in January.** Employment in the goods sector increased by 2.1% (*seasonally adjusted*). Increases were seen in three major industries: forestry, fishing & mining (+8.9%), construction (+3.4%) and manufacturing (+0.8%). Employment was down in utilities (-15.1%) and agriculture (-1.4%).

  The service sector recorded a more moderate increase in employment (+1.2%) as job growth in some industries was offset by declines in others. Employment in information, recreation & culture (+7.6%), and accommodation, food & beverage service (+5.3%) took on a significant number of workers. However, finance, insurance, real estate & leasing slipped 6.8%. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC product exports increased 5.6% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December, as shipments to the US (+3.7%) and overseas (+8.4%) recovered from downturns in November.** Exports of BC energy products overseas were up 22.5%, accounting for much of the increase in shipments to countries other than the US. Forest product exports rose 2.0%, largely because shipments south of the border increased (+6.7%) in December. With the exception of energy (-8.3%), US-bound exports of all other major commodity groups were up from November levels.

  Canadian exports surged, rising 3.8% to $40.4 billion. All sectors recorded increases in December but exports of energy (+5.8%) and automotive (+8.4%) products led the pack. Shipments to the US rose 3.2%, with even stronger growth in exports to Japan (+4.9%). On the other hand, demand from the EU (-4.7%) was down.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **Housing starts in the province jumped 15.0% (*seasonally adjusted*) in January, following two months of declines.** With the exception of PEI (-16.7%) and Newfoundland (+0.0%), starts were up in all provinces. Canadian starts climbed 17.3%, with increases ranging from 3.7% in Quebec to a whopping 107.9% in Manitoba. *Data Source: CMHC*

- **Following a record month, the value of building permits issued by BC municipalities retreated (-40.2%, *seasonally adjusted*) in December.** Declines were recorded in the value of residential permits issued (-30.9%) while drop-offs in the industrial (-64.7%), commercial (-56.5%) and institutional (-51.2%) sectors pushed planned spending on non-residential projects down 56.2%.

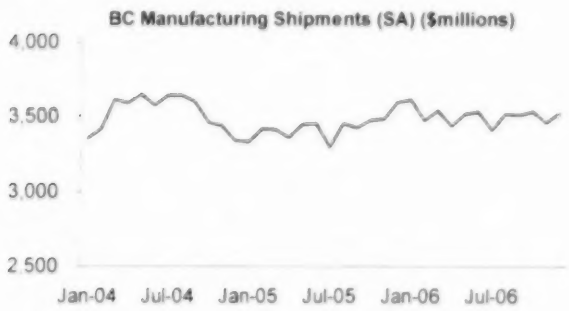
In Victoria, permits slipped 5.0%, while Abbotsford (-70.7%) and Vancouver (-55.1%) experienced more substantial decreases.

Nationally, permits dropped 7.8% with declines ranging from -7.3% in PEI to -60.6% in Newfoundland. Ontario (+0.2%), Alberta (+5.5%), Quebec (+14.2%) and Nova Scotia (+26.3%) were the only provinces to see an increase in the value of building permits in the last month of 2006.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in British Columbia climbed (+2.1%, *seasonally adjusted*) in December, recovering from a similar decline in the previous month.** Producers of durable products continued to experience volatility with shipments rising 1.0% following a 1.2% slip in November. The value of wood shipments (+2.0%) increased despite continued low prices for softwood and other wood products. BC producers of fabricated metals (+3.2%) computer & electronic products (+4.7%) and non-metallic minerals (+12.8%) made considerable gains. On the non-durables side, paper (+3.2%) and food (+1.6%) shipments were higher than in November, and the chemical industry began to recover (+1.2%) from a two-month-long slump. Overall, shipments of non-durables rose 3.5%.

Data Source: Statistics Canada



- **British Columbia's year-over-year inflation rate remained steady (+2.2%) in January, as the all-items Consumer Price Index (CPI) was relatively unchanged from December (+2.1%).** Consumers paid 4.0% more for energy, as prices at the pump (+6.4%) and the cost of fuel oil (+9.5%) rose substantially. However, piped gas (-8.2%) cost notably less than in January of last year. Despite the overall increase, energy was less of a contributing factor than it has been in previous months. Excluding energy products, BC's inflation rate would have been just slightly lower (+2.0%).

Transportation costs rose 2.7%, reflecting jumps in the cost of both public (+2.8%) and private (+2.7%) transportation relative to January 2006. British Columbians faced moderately higher prices for most types of goods and services. Shelter costs were up 2.3% as homeowners paid 2.9% more for their accommodation, and renters faced an increase of 0.7%. The cost of operating and furnishing a home increased a modest 0.9%, while household equipment prices were down (-4.3%). Consumers paid more for food (+2.5%), clothing (+4.7%), health & personal care (+2.1%), and education (+2.1%) than in January of 2006. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Sales by retailers in the province ended the year on a high note, advancing 2.4% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December.** Despite December's increase, retail sales in BC have been growing at a slower pace in recent months. The severe wind and snow storms that hit the province in late November may have contributed to the slowdown. Retailers in every province fared well during the Christmas season. Nationally, retail sales were up 2.3% on the strength of solid gains in Ontario (+2.9%), Quebec (+1.8%), Alberta (+2.0%) and parts of Atlantic Canada.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Wholesale sales in the province were off again in December, inching down 0.3% (*seasonally adjusted*).** Canadian sales were stronger (+2.7%) with five provinces recording increases in wholesaling activities. Continued resurgence in the automotive sector significantly boosted Ontario's wholesale sales (+5.3%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

MONTHLY STATISTICS

	UNITS	REFERENCE PERIOD	CURRENT			MONTHLY AVERAGE YEAR-TO-DATE	
			LATEST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM LAST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO	AMOUNT	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO
PRICES							
Consumer Price Index-BC	1992=100	Jan '07	128.4	0.1	2.2	128.4	2.2
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	1992=100	Jan '07	129.3	-0.1	2.6	129.3	2.6
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	1992=100	Jan '07	128.1	0.1	1.7	128.1	1.7
Consumer Price Index-Canada	1992=100	Jan '07	130.3	0.1	1.2	130.3	1.2
Consumer Price Index-USA	1982-84=100	Dec '06	201.8	0.1	2.5	201.6	3.2
Industry Price Index-Canada	1997=100	Dec '06	115.2	1.4	3.6	113.8	2.3
LABOUR							
Unemployment Rate (SA)*-BC	Percent	Jan '07	4.3	(5.2)	(5.0)	4.3	(5.0)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-Canada	Percent	Jan '07	6.2	(6.1)	(6.6)	6.2	(6.6)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-USA	Percent	Jan '07	4.6	(4.5)	(4.7)	4.6	(4.7)
Unemployed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Jan '07	101.8	-16.7	-10.5	101.8	-10.5
Employed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Jan '07	2,250.2	1.4	3.7	2,250.2	3.7
Labour Force (SA)-BC	Thousand	Jan '07	2,352.0	0.5	3.0	2,352.0	3.0
Participation Rate (SA)-BC	Percent	Jan '07	66.4	(66.2)	(65.5)	66.4	(65.5)
Regular EI Benefits Paid	$Million	Dec '06	59.3	16.9	-8.0	60.3	-13.6
Regular EI Beneficiaries	Persons	Dec '06	47,560	17.1	-11.0	44,313	-16.8
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	Jan '07	743.37	0.6	3.2	743.37	3.2
Wages and Salaries-BC (SA)	$Million	Sep '06	6,701.9	-0.3	7.3	6,604.5	8.1
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC	1996=100	Dec '06	120.8	1.8	3.4	118.1	1.9
PRODUCTION-B.C.							
Lumber-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Dec '06	2,664.9	-16.2	-10.0	3,420.9	0.1
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Dec '06	355	5.3	-26.3	395	-4.0
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Dec '06	100	19.0	-2.0	88	-1.6
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Dec '06	158	0.0	5.3	163	4.4
Coal-Tonnes	Thousand	Nov '06	1,866.0	-2.8	4.3	1,761.0	-18.7
Oil-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Oct '06	136.8	-6.4	-5.3	138.1	-6.8
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres	Million	Oct '06	3,034.2	3.1	10.3	2,877.0	8.6
Electric Power Generated	GW h	Nov '06	5,747.7	18.2	-7.3	5,050.3	-9.0
Manufacturing Shipments (SA)	$Million	Dec '06	3,527.3	2.1	-2.0	3,504.8	2.2
GENERAL							
Housing Starts-All Areas BC(SAAR)**	Thousand	Jan '07	38.4	12.6	8.8	38.4	8.8
Housing Starts-USA (SAAR)**	Thousand	Jan '07	1,408.0	-14.3	-37.8	1,408.0	-37.8
Building Permits-BC (SA)	$Million	Dec '06	847.8	-40.2	-19.3	972.5	14.5
Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Dec '06	620.7	-30.9	-21.0	639.0	9.9
Non-Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Dec '06	227.1	-56.2	-14.3	333.5	24.6
Retail Sales (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Dec '06	4,486.0	2.4	5.8	4,428.3	6.2
Wholesale Trade (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Dec '06	4,156.0	-0.3	-0.4	4,231.2	7.4
Tourism Room Revenues (SA)-BC	$Thousand	Oct '06	156,469	2.4	12.4	150,439	8.4
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Dec '06	37	-9.8	-38.3	49	-25.3
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Dec '06	437	-16.9	-15.5	585	-14.1
Incorporations-BC	Number	Dec '06	2,363	-3.7	-3.3	2,556	7.3
Exports Originating in BC (SA)	$Million	Dec '06	2,739.2	5.6	-12.7	2,775.6	-2.3

March 1, 2007

*SA indicates seasonal adjustment.

**SAAR indicates seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

Brackets () indicate that rates are shown instead of percentage changes.

ANNUAL STATISTICS

	UNITS	YEAR				PERCENT CHA		
		2006	2005	2004	2003	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003
PRICES								
Consumer Price Index-BC	1992=100	127.5	125.3	122.8	120.4	1.8	2.0	2.0
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	1992=100	128.1	125.7	123.4	121.0	1.9	1.9	2.0
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	1992=100	127.5	125.5	122.8	120.0	1.6	2.2	2.3
Consumer Price Index-Canada	1992=100	129.9	127.3	124.6	122.3	2.0	2.2	1.9
Consumer Price Index-USA*	1982-84=100	201.6	195.3	188.9	184.0	3.2	3.4	2.7
Industry Price Index-Canada*	1997=100	113.8	111.2	109.5	106.2	2.3	1.6	3.1
LABOUR								
Unemployment Rate-BC	Percent	4.8	5.9	7.2	8.0			
Unemployment Rate-Canada	Percent	6.3	6.8	7.2	7.6			
Unemployment Rate-USA*	Percent	4.6	5.1	5.5	6.0			
Unemployed-BC	Thousand	109.6	132.9	159.2	176.0	-17.5	-16.5	-9.5
Employed-BC	Thousand	2,195.5	2,130.5	2,062.7	2,014.7	3.1	3.3	2.4
Labour Force-BC	Thousand	2,305.1	2,263.4	2,221.9	2,190.7	1.8	1.9	1.4
Participation Rate-BC	Percent	65.7	65.6	65.5	65.6			
Total EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	1,564.2	1,650.3	1,764.0	1,831.3	-5.2	-6.4	-3.7
Regular EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	723.7	837.4	960.4	1,059.5	-13.6	-12.8	-9.4
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	726.02	704.49	686.74	683.68	3.1	2.6	0.4
Wages and Salaries-BC*	$Million	n/a	73,916.0	69,365.6	65,310.1	n/a	6.6	6.2
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC*	1996=100	118.1	115.9	112.9	108.5	1.9	2.7	4.1
PRODUCTION-B.C.								
Lumber-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	41,050.7	41,012.9	39,879.3	36,030.9	0.1	2.8	[redacted]
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	4,736	4,932	4,724	4,762	-4.0	4.4	[redacted]
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	1,059	1,076	1,135	1,186	-1.6	-5.2	-4.3
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	1,960	1,877	1,841	1,733	4.4	2.0	6.2
Coal-Tonnes*	Thousand	n/a	25,571.0	27,082.0	23,061.0	n/a	-5.6	17.4
Oil-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	n/a	1,765.7	2,019.0	2,168.2	n/a	-12.5	-6.9
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres*	Million	n/a	31,892.8	31,201.3	29,483.4	n/a	2.2	5.8
Electric Power Generated*	GW h	n/a	67,811.2	60,495.6	63,050.9	n/a	12.1	-4.1
Solid Mineral Shipments	$Million	n/a	4,862.9	3,674.5	2,926.5	n/a	32.3	25.6
Farm Cash Receipts**	$Million	2,323.7	2,383.8	2,401.7	2,283.3	-2.5	-0.7	5.2
Manufacturing Shipments*	$Million	42,132.5	41,139.8	42,303.5	39,691.0	2.4	-2.8	6.6
GENERAL								
Housing Starts-All Areas BC**	Thousand	36.4	34.7	32.9	26.2	5.1	5.3	25.8
Housing Starts-USA	Thousand	1,801.6	2,068.3	1,955.8	1,847.7	-12.9	5.8	5.9
Building Permits-BC*	$Million	11,541.1	10,191.1	7,938.7	6,394.2	13.2	28.4	24.2
Residential-BC*	$Million	7,624.1	6,979.0	5,868.9	4,514.2	9.2	18.9	30.0
Non-Residential-BC*	$Million	3,917.0	3,212.1	2,069.8	1,880.1	21.9	55.2	10.1
Retail Sales (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	53,135.7	49,914.5	47,216.6	44,421.0	6.5	5.7	6.3
Wholesale Trade (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	50,680.2	47,277.0	43,521.2	39,658.9	7.2	8.6	9.7
Tourism Room Revenues-BC*	$Thousand	n/a	1,690.1	1,592.2	1,486.7	n/a	6.2	7.1
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	587	786	922	1,002	-25.3	-14.8	-8.0
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	7,021	8,173	8,378	9,385	-14.1	-2.4	-10.7
Incorporations-BC*	Number	30,667	28,593	25,428	23,243	7.3	12.4	9.4
Exports Originating in BC*	$Million	33,306.6	34,101.4	30,991.6	28,264.4	-2.3	10.0	9.6
Capital Expenditures-BC	$Million	37,575.8	33,254.2	29,664.7	25,434.1	13.0	12.1	[redacted]
Population-BC (as of July 1)	Thousand	4,310,452	4,257,833	4,203,315	4,155,370	1.2	1.3	[redacted]

March 1, 2007

* derived from monthly figures

**derived from quarterly figures

n/a not available

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT ($ MILLIONS)

	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
	2006	2005	2004	2003	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04
BRITISH COLUMBIA							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	n/a	168,855	157,540	145,763	n/a	7.2	8.1
Real Gross Domestic Product (chained 1997 $)	n/a	145,501	140,263	134,131	n/a	3.7	4.6
CANADA							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	n/a	1,371,425	1,290,788	1,213,408	n/a	6.2	6.4
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 1997 $)	n/a	1,157,705	1,124,688	1,088,773	n/a	2.9	3.3
UNITED STATES (Billions $US) **							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	13,253.9	12,455.8	11,712.5	10,960.8	6.4	6.3	6.9
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 2000 $US)	11,422.4	11,048.6	10,703.5	10,301.0	3.4	3.2	3.9

*** US Department of Commerce (actual)*

INTEREST AND EXCHANGE RATES

(Source: Bank of Canada)

	Feb. 28/07	Feb. 21/07	Jan. 31/07	Feb. 22/06
	PERCENT PER ANNUM			
CANADA				
Prime Business Rate	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.25
Bank Rate	4.50	4.50	4.50	3.75
Long-Term Government Bond Rate (over 10 yrs)	-	4.15	4.23	4.17
Conventional Mortgages - 1 Year	6.50	6.50	6.50	5.85
- 5 Years	6.65	6.65	6.65	6.45
UNITED STATES				
Prime Rate	8.25	8.25	8.25	7.50
EXCHANGE RATES (average noon)	CANADIAN $			
US Dollar	1.1700	1.1612	1.1792	1.1482
Japanese Yen	0.0099	0.0096	0.0097	0.0097
British Pound	2.2946	2.2669	2.3123	2.0006
Euro	1.5479	1.5240	1.5328	1.3669

FORECASTS

	2006	2007			2008		
	REAL GDP % CHG	REAL GDP % CHG	UNEMP RATE %	CPI % CHG	REAL GDP % CHG	UNEMP RATE %	CPI % CHG
BRITISH COLUMBIA							
BC Government (February 2007, Budget 2007)	3.9	3.1	4.8	2.0	3.0	4.8	2.0
Credit Union Central BC (October 2006)	4.2	4.0	3.6	1.9	3.5	3.3	2.1
Conference Board of Canada (February 8, 2007)	3.3	3.1	4.9	na	3.3	4.5	na
Scotia Economics (February 15, 2007)	4.2	3.2	4.6	na	3.5	4.4	na
TD Bank (January 17, 2007)	4.0	3.0	5.2	1.9	3.3	5.1	2.0
CIBC WM Economics (October 31, 2006)	4.5	3.6	4.6	2.1	na	na	na
Global Insight (January 2007)	4.1	2.8	4.6	1.7	2.9	5.2	1.9
CANADA							
TD Bank (January 17, 2007)	2.7	2.2	6.4	1.6	3.2	6.3	2.1
CIBC WM Economics (February 12, 2007)	2.7	2.1	6.3	1.9	2.7	6.3	2.3
Global Insight (February 2007)	2.7	2.1	6.4	1.5	3.0	6.5	2.1
UNITED STATES							
TD Bank (December 19, 2006)	n/a	2.4	5.0	2.0	3.6	5.0	2.5
CIBC WM Economics (February 12, 2007)	n/a	2.5	4.8	2.1	3.0	4.9	2.6
Global Insight (February 2007)	n/a	2.7	4.7	1.5	3.0	4.7	2.3